



CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

Date: May 3, 2016

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

Through: W. Bowman Ferguson, Deputy City Manager

From: Steven W. Hicks, Director of General Services

Subject: Resolution to Establish the City of Durham as a “Bee City USA”

Executive Summary:

Bee City USA is a program sponsored by the Center for Honeybee Research in Asheville, NC. To promote best practices that preserve favorable conditions for honey and native bees and other pollinator insects to thrive in our community, and to subsequently show support for urban agriculture, the City of Durham can become a Bee City.

Bee City USA designation is both an honor and a responsibility. The Bee City USA program consists of several commitments for creating sustainable pollinator habitats. Cities and towns across America are encouraged to adopt these commitments and become a Bee City USA. One of these commitments is to adopt the Bee City USA resolution. This resolution has the support of the Durham Bee City USA committee which includes residents and local businesses who rely on the health of honey and native bees in Durham.

Honey and native bees and other animal pollinators are vital to humans and the planet. Eighty-five percent of flowering plants depend on pollinators for reproduction. Honey and native bees and other pollinators around the world have experienced dramatic declines in recent years. The Bee City USA program seeks to promote healthy, sustainable habitats and communities for honey and native bees and other pollinators, one municipality at a time.

Recommendation

The General Services Department recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution designating Durham as a Bee City USA.

Background

Over the last year, staff from Keep Durham Beautiful has participated in several meetings of the Durham Bee City USA Committee, in which the importance of promoting a healthy honey and native bee and pollinator population in Durham was emphasized. The Durham Bee City

USA Committee is comprised of individuals who own or work for businesses dependent upon healthy honey and native bee populations or serve as government agency liaisons. The committee has requested that the Keep Durham Beautiful Program Coordinator serve as their official government liaison to sponsor the Durham Bee City USA program.

By becoming a Bee City USA community, city leaders are encouraged to collaborate with local honey and native bee keepers, related businesses and residents to celebrate and raise awareness of the contribution honey and native bees and other pollinators make to the world and to improve community environment, eating habits, and economy. Bee City USA can:

- help ensure the survival of vital animal species crucial to the planet's complex food web
- raise community awareness of how our food grows and improve local food production through expanded pollination
- improve local plant nursery markets by increasing demand for native, bee and other pollinator friendly plants
- raise community awareness of the dangers of non-native invasive plants to the local ecosystem
- raise community awareness of the least toxic ways to deal with home and garden pest problems
- raise community awareness of the local environment's seasonality as understanding grows about the pollinators' reliance on blooming plants and trees
- encourage urban beekeeping, increasing micro and small business opportunities

Issues and Analysis

For the City of Durham to be designated as a Bee City USA, the City must agree to make the three commitments required of all Bee City USA communities. There is no cost to the City to be a Bee City USA.

1. The first one is to adopt a resolution formally agreeing to the commitment to being named a Bee City USA.
2. The second is for a non-profit organization or a new or existing City or County commission to accept facilitation responsibilities for Bee City USA. This commitment is proposed to be addressed by Bee Downtown, a local non-profit who provides rooftop and observation beehives. Bee Downtown will take responsibility for meeting the annual requirements to continue as a Bee City USA in good standing on behalf of the Durham Bee City USA Committee, which first convened in August 2015.

Facilitation responsibilities include:

- an annual observance of National Pollinator week, which includes a Proclamation and public awareness activities (Bee City USA affiliates are required to host a minimum of one event each year)
 - an annual application for renewal of the community's Bee City USA certification
 - submittal of an annual report of the previous year's Bee City USA activities to Bee City USA
3. Third is to install and maintain at least one authorized Bee City USA street sign in a

prominent location and to create and maintain links to our Bee City USA work on the City's website. These tasks would be addressed by the Keep Durham Beautiful Program Coordinator.

After the resolution is approved, it will be sent with an initial application for Bee City USA designation. The Durham Bee City USA Committee hopes that the designation will be able to be announced during National Pollinator Week in June.

Alternatives

The City could choose to not adopt the Resolution, but it is a good way for the City of Durham to show its support for environmental sustainability in the Durham community.

Attachment: Bee City USA Resolution